

Smog

BUSTERS

UPDATE

December 2000 Issue Number 25

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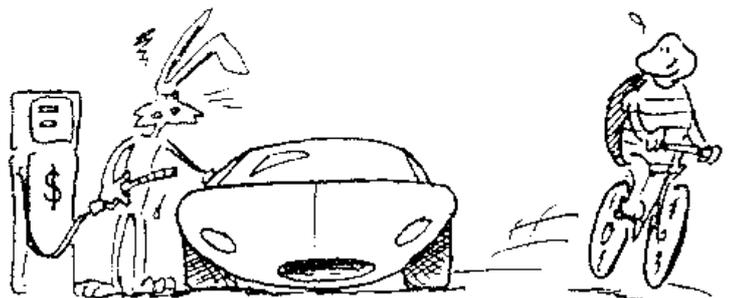
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Queensland
Conservation
Council

Making the Most of "The Petrol Opportunity"

Crisis? What Crisis? Eric Manners says "Don't Panic!" - if we play our cards right, we can turn a "crisis" into an "opportunity".



Cartoon by Ross Carnsew

As a regular blood donor, I'm used to the appeal "Our stocks are running low! Please donate blood or PEOPLE WILL DIE!" And this claim is probably true. After all, not all people are lucky enough to have a permanent, ample supply of blood as I do. Blood for some is a priceless, non-renewable resource.

But while blood stocks continue to languish, a new "crisis" has arisen: "We must lower petrol prices, or PEOPLE WILL DIE!" Convincing? Apparently, judging by the political response across the developed world. Strangely, though, I'm yet to run into a human whose veins run not red, but rather a sort of smelly, viscous brown. (And truly, if such a race had ever existed on the planet, we would have fed them to our cars long ago, or developed a battery cage breeding system.)

So why are we so dependent on this stuff? Why are we more concerned about petrol shortages than blood shortages? And the question everyone wants an answer to: How can we get relief from high petrol prices?

A 3-Step Plan?

The first step is for us as a society to "*Admit that we have a problem.*" We are petro-holics (anonymous, if you prefer) - but don't despair, we're on the road (rails, bike lane, footpath...) to recovery!

The second step, straight from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (a top reference for creative car-pooling): *Don't panic!*

And the third (and most boring) step is to undertake some *sound policy shifts* to ease our petrol withdrawal symptoms. I've provided a few thoughts here, some ideas to mention to your neighbours, local newspapers and democratically-elected local, state and federal representatives.

(Story continues on Page 5)

Editorial Notes

With the departure of our dedicated leader of five years, James Whelan, Smogbusters is entering a new era. "The post-James era"? (You'll be glad to know that James' reply to this suggestion was: "Wishful thinking!") Well, James, what do you think about "the super-James era"? (I'm thinking of "super" in the Hollywood sense more than the Latin sense.)



As a long-time Smogbusters volunteer under James, I am keen to carry on the fabulous work he's been doing to protect air quality and promote sustainable transport in Queensland. Nevertheless, you will no doubt notice a definite transition period as I gradually get up to full speed.

New elements of the *SB Update*? The most important may be the "Coalition Page", which will hopefully bring us closer to a Queensland sustainable transport coalition. In addition, we've added Campaign Updates, feature stories, Smogbuster Profile (next issue), and an expanded list of "Helpful People". Letters to Aunt Smoggy are also still welcome!

Thanks to the volunteers and contributors who have helped me put this first newsletter behind me, and I am keen for more contributions for the next edition, February 2001.

Happy Smogbusting!
Eric Manners, QCC Smogbusters Project Officer



Department of the Environment and Heritage



Natural Heritage Trust

"Smogbusters is a joint initiative of [Qld Conservation Council] and the Federal Government through the Natural Heritage Trust."

"The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views or reflect the policies of the Federal Government or Environment Australia."

Smogbusters News

Smogbusters Action Group back in action

The Smogbusters Action Group has reconvened, giving Serious Smogbusters a chance to get more deeply involved in the campaign to protect our air. Our last meeting of the year is Wednesday, 6 December 2000, 6pm at QCC, 166 Ann St in Brisbane.

Action Group meetings next year will probably take place the 1st and 3rd Wednesday nights of each month, 6pm at QCC. Please let us know if you would be keen to attend meetings but will be unable to make this time.

And please also let us know if you would like to form your own Smogbusters Action Group outside of Brisbane or SEQ. Help lead the Smogbusters Revolution!

Smogbusters Day, 14 March 2001

The third annual National Smogbusters Day will take place Wednesday, 14 March 2001, and it's time to start planning! Last March we gave out thousands of free trees, and saw about twelve different community-led activities happen at workplaces, schools and universities all over South East Queensland. This year I think we can double that, and extend Smogbusters Day right throughout the state.

If you would like to organise a Smogbusters Day activity to promote clean air in your local community, please feel free to call me or send me an email and we can come up with some ideas.

Are you connected?

We have three new Smogbusters Email Networks to keep you informed:

- Smogbusters Update by Email (quarterly newsletter);
- the Smog News Network (clean air and sustainable transport news and events - one or two messages per fortnight); and
- the Smogbusters Action Network (for Serious Smogbusters! - two or three messages per week)

If you have not already joined, please email smog@qccqld.org.au and quote the networks you would like to be added to.

Also, we are always updating our mailing list. Please let us know of any changes to your details.

Smogbusters Way to Uni

Smogbusters continues to break new ground in the area of "travel demand management" (TDM) - that is, reducing the demand for motor vehicle use and road space. In addition to the Way to Work program (focused on workplaces), this year we will undertake a Way to Uni program. If you are a student or staff member at a university in Queensland and would like to help promote alternative travel at your uni, please give us a call, or pass on to us the contact details of relevant university officials. O-Week is a great opportunity to encourage new and returning students and staff to make more responsible travel choices for the upcoming year, and YOU CAN HELP!

Upgrading the Smogbusters Website

The Smoggies website is currently undergoing renovation. Please let us know of any helpful resources, internet links or information you would like to see added.

We are also looking for individuals with web weaving experience to assist with the more technical side.

Have a look and let us know what you think: www.powerup.com.au/~qccqld/smogbusters

Smogbusters SA Forum

By Sheila Brown, Smogbusters SA

On Saturday, 7 October 2000, People for Public Transport (PPT) in Adelaide held a Community Forum entitled 'Public Transport - dinosaur or way of the future?'. The keynote address was given by Dr Paul Mees, Lecturer in Transport at Melbourne University and President of the Public Transport Users Association in Victoria. Other speakers included David Hill, Research Officer, Australasian Railway Association; the Hon Diana Laidlaw MLC, SA Minister for Transport and Urban Planning; and the Hon Sandra Kanck, MP.

The forum was also an opportunity for PPT to launch their new website, at www.ppt.asn.au

Smogbuster
James:
Man, Myth,
Legend...



Clearing the Air Forum a hit

Sixty concerned breathers gathered in Brisbane on Saturday 12 August 2000 for a community forum entitled "Clearing the Air in South East Queensland", presented by the Queensland Conservation Council and Smogbusters.

Participants included representatives of the private sector, public sector and the general community. The Forum was made possible by sponsorship from the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, Ipswich City Council, Logan City Council, Griffith University, BP, Ergon Energy, CS Energy and Queensland Rail.

The main focus of the day was the state government's South East Queensland Regional Air Quality Strategy (SEQRAQS), endorsed by the Minister for Environment & Heritage Rod Welford in December 1999 but as yet largely unimplemented due to insufficient funding.

Out of the 179 actions included in the Strategy, participants isolated 13 priority actions and agreed upon three resolutions:

1. That the Queensland Government finalise its commitment to SEQRAQS by providing adequate funding for implementation;
2. That the Queensland Minister for Environment & Heritage establish a SEQRAQS Reference Group comprised of community, government and industry representatives to oversee and monitor implementation of the strategy (note: establishment of the Reference Group is included as a specific action of the strategy); and
3. That the Queensland Minister for Environment & Heritage address other areas of state government (such as transport, mining and energy) where current activities and policies have a negative impact on air quality.

Incidentally, good progress has been made towards Resolutions 2 and 3, with the EPA establishing a SEQRAQS Implementation Group (QCC has been invited as a member) as well as a cross-agency state government committee.

For the complete Forum Summary, contact Eric at QCC. If you would like to know more about SEQRAQS, FREE copies are available from the EPA. Ring (07) 3227 8186, visit the EPA shop at 160 Ann St (next door to QCC), or download a PDF version of SEQRAQS from www.env.qld.gov.au/environment/environment/air/

Qld Health Getting Active on Air Pollution

Many who have been eager to see Queensland Health get involved in air quality issues will be pleased to hear of the one-day Air Forum held by Qld Health on Monday, 20 November.

Smogbusters Eric Manners and Brian Clark showed attendees how the Qld Conservation Council works with community groups and individuals when toxic emissions from new developments threaten the health standards and quality of life of local communities.

QCC's focus was on two case studies. The first was the Synergy Park bio-mass power station proposal that was scrapped as a result of community concern that third-world technology was being used rather than world's best practice. The second focus was on indoor air pollution near major arterial roads, motorways and busways, which is a major threat to the health of thousands of Queenslanders.

Forum Proceedings will soon be available in the Smogbusters library.

Smart Urban Transport Conference

Eric recently attended Transport Roundtable Australasia's "Smart Urban Transport Conference: Using Transitways and Busways".

Busway experts from around the world looked at where busways and transitways could or could not be more useful than rail, and there was some discussion of co-location of buses and light rail though unfortunately little discussion of environmental considerations.

The proceedings have been added to the Smogbusters library and contain all you could ever want to know about busways and transitways. Come in and have a look!

Volunteer with Smogbusters

If you're looking for experience in the environment movement, look no further! At Smogbusters, our door is always open to motivated individuals wanting to increase their skills in campaigning, research, project management and administration. If interested, please call Eric or Helenka on 3221 0188.

QCC is a member of Volunteering Queensland.

Campaign Updates

- **SEQRAQS Implementation Group** - As per Resolution 2 from the Clearing the Air Forum (Aug 2000), QCC has been invited to be a member of the stakeholder group overseeing implementation of the South East Queensland Regional Air Quality Strategy (SEQRAQS). This is a key step towards getting SEQRAQS moving. The group is yet to meet.
- **Fair Bus Fares Alliance** - Student, unemployed, environment and other groups are still struggling to bring monthly tickets back to Brisbane buses and ferries. While Brisbane City Council have refused to budge, they have commenced a strong post-card campaign to bring fuel tax money back to Brisbane in the form of improved public transport. Stay tuned!
- **Integrated Fares & Ticketing** - Queensland Transport's integrated fares and ticketing project is moving forward, with SEQ public transport providers negotiating their way through a draft scheme. Smogbusters is highly supportive of integrated ticketing, but the final fare structure must make public transport (and especially multi-modal trips) less expensive and more convenient, and must actually increase public transport use.

Protect the environment - while enjoying a beer!



No kitchen or camping set is complete without a couple of Qld Conservation Council stubbie holders. What better way to showcase to friends your die-hard support for all things green (even though they are in fact maroon)? And they make great gifts too!

Reasonably priced (\$8 postage paid), and all profits go back into the work of the QCC - Protecting, Conserving and Sustaining Queensland for future generations!

Order over the phone on (07) 3221 0188, or email smog@qccqld.org.au.

The Coalition Page

Walking, Accessibility and Cycling ... all part of the same transport system?

Michael Yeates, convenor of the Public Transport Alliance, writes on the importance of a united front for public transport, pedestrian, cyclist and accessibility campaigning.

How well is access to public transport addressed in South East Queensland? How might it be achieved? Is it simply good urban design? Who benefits? How do we get there?

A Question of Equity

If it is essential to provide high quality access to public transport in order to achieve increased demand and to support higher frequency, the level of service for access should cater for all people who might wish to use public transport. High quality wide flat concrete footpaths with very high quality kerb ramps allowing easy access across streets are essential. This should set a minimum standard rather than be an exception. Citytrain is making stations more accessible. However, although Brisbane City Council and other bus operators have an increasing number of accessible buses, it is rare for bus stops and access to them to be designed

for accessibility. When done, though, use increases because people can make the trip!

Who benefits?

Designing urban areas for high levels of accessibility may seem unnecessary. Indeed it is often argued that there is nobody who needs such facilities. But without accessibility, people who rely on it either cannot live in the area or are forced to rely on private cars or taxis. In fact, most if not all people benefit from the higher quality flatter footpaths, the easier kerb crossings and the safer access to and from public transport: whether a low floor or tilting bus or train with the floor level similar to the platform. In practice, young children, the elderly, those with temporary access disability or carrying heavy parcels or luggage etc, all gain from high levels of accessibility.

How safe and convenient?

While access is important, safety and convenience are of prime importance. On major roads for example, pedestrian controlled crossings must maximise safety and convenience for public

transport users of all ages and abilities and especially for the elderly in older inner city suburbs where through traffic has continued to reduce safety and convenience for people walking. When high levels of access are provided by footpaths, cycling is encouraged and conflict between cyclists and people walking is inevitable. Arguably, however, if traffic conditions are safe for the young, elderly and those with access disabilities, cycling on the road rather than the footpath is more beneficial for cyclists. Thus, if safety and convenience provide access for people of all ages and abilities, cycling will be improved.

Working together to benefit all of us

If good urban design can provide access for all, it is clear that advocacies for people with access disabilities, for pedestrians and for cyclists should seek outcomes which suit all these groups rather than only with their own needs. The PTA was founded on the basis that integrated transport planning will only occur with an "alliance" of non-motorised road users seeking universal outcomes. The best outcomes to date have proven that position correct.

FEET FIRST: Advocates for Pedestrian Access

Bob Culerbiloon proclaims an exciting new West End-based footpath force!

We are all pedestrians for at least some part of every journey and walking (or wheeling) is a crucial part of our transport system. About 20% of all trips are made by walking, but facilities for pedestrians receive far less than 1% of transport budgets. Unfortunately pedestrians also make up about 16% of the road toll each year but have not received any Federal Blackspot funding to date, and very little of the money spent on road safety each year is directed at improving pedestrian safety.

Walking needs to be promoted as a transport mode. Walking is healthy, cheap, and accessible to everyone. Legs, wheelchairs and even skateboards and scooters are perfect "no-emission" vehicles. There is great scope for increasing walking trips. Almost 50% of all journeys in Queensland are 2km or less (including many car trips). And if you provide infrastructure that is accessible to people with walking difficulties, then it's accessible to pretty much everyone. That's why we've started Feet First.

Feet First is a pedestrian advocacy group based in West End. We are seeking a better environment for pedestrians. Our aims are:

- to promote walking as a way to a healthier life and a wealthier community
- to make the inner city area a walking-friendly environment
- to improve the safety of walkers
- to raise the profile of walking
- to promote walking as a mode of transport
- to promote walking as a leisure and tourism activity
- to improve access for people who have difficulty walking

The group is open to anyone interested in pedestrian issues. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 5.30-7pm at West End Community House, 4 Norfolk Rd, South Brisbane (near West End Markets and accessible by foot, bicycle or public transport). Contact Feet First c/- West End Community House on ph 3846 2114 or come along to our meetings.

Happy walking!

Editor's Note: The purpose of the "Coalition Page" is to stimulate interest in a Sustainable Transport Coalition in Queensland. The page will highlight some of the common concerns and solutions that would bring such a coalition together. Future contributions are welcomed from groups concerned about growing motor vehicle use!

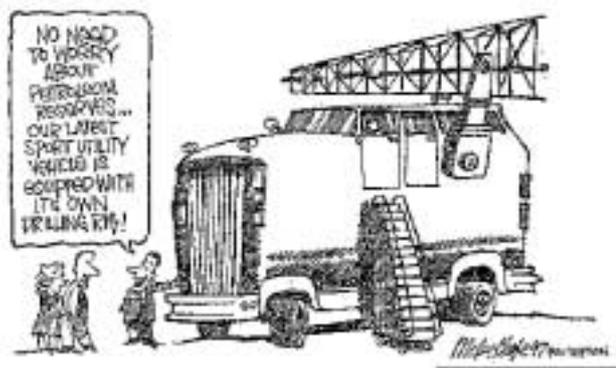
Darlene Clover to visit Griffith EcoCentre, 6-7 Dec

Darlene Clover, a world-leading environmental adult educator from the University of Toronto, Canada, will present "Beyond Awareness Raising", 6-7 December at the Griffith University EcoCentre, Nathan Campus.

The workshop will explore models of practice that can prove effective in empowering communities to engage with and actively participate in the resolution of pressing environmental concerns.

For more information, contact Andy Nicholson at the Griffith University EcoCentre on 07 3875 7124, email a.nicholson@mailbox.gu.edu.au

"The Petrol Opportunity"



*Making the Most of The Petrol Opportunity
Continued from Page 1...*

How much oil is left?

The creation of oil under the earth's surface requires a very unique set of events to take place - millions of years ago. Because this "unique" scenario has not been very common throughout our planet's history, and because we have been very successful in locating and exploiting the best sources, the only remaining "giant" oil fields happen to be clustered in the Middle East. This is why the OPEC countries, the only ones with any capacity to considerably increase oil production in the near future, has such a stranglehold on global oil.

In terms of the total amount of oil still available, the most reliable source is an independent team of former oil engineers, Colin Campbell and Jean Laherrere. Their March 2000 estimate was that about 980 billion barrels or giga-barrels (Gb) of oil remains on the planet, compared to the 820 Gb that humans have consumed.

While other estimates may give us another few hundred billion barrels, at present rates of growth of oil consumption all agree that we will run out of conventional oil (the stuff that's cheap to find, extract and process) by about 2075.

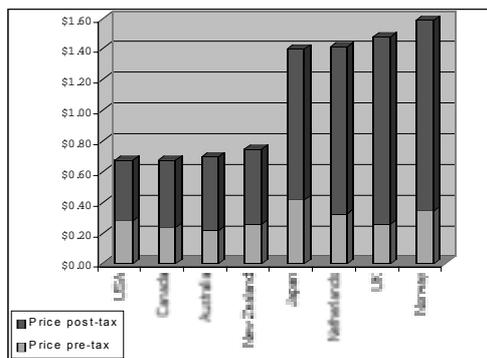
But long before this (in fact very soon), once we've used more oil than we have left, the price will skyrocket, never to recover. (The oil industry suggests that this is not a problem - high prices will make non-conventional oil sources like shale oil and tar sands economical to extract, and we could keep going on those supplies possibly into the 23rd century! So the more we're willing to pay, the more oil there is! Anyone for \$10 a litre? \$20 a litre?)

A Global Price Comparison

Only the USA and Canada have cheaper petrol than Australia. Are we lucky? In fact, affordable petrol encourages people to use motor vehicles instead of using other modes or combining and

eliminating trips.

The figure below shows a comparison of petrol prices (in US \$ per litre) around the world. Note that petrol costs much more in countries where private motor vehicle use is being actively discouraged, with proceeds going towards providing alternatives to the automobile.



Source: The Australian Institute of Petroleum website, <http://www.aip.com.au/>

Two options for moving forward

I figure we have two options. The first is to spend taxpayers' money providing people who drive with short-term relief from rising petrol prices. Unfortunately, global factors would eventually wipe out any benefit of this expensive subsidy, and even worse:

- We would remain dependent on oil;
- Our greenhouse gas emissions (and therefore global temperatures) would grow even faster;
- Air would become even harder to breathe; and
- All of the problems of widespread motor vehicle use would worsen, including traffic congestion, noise, urban sprawl, road toll, deteriorating public health, loss of green space, property depreciation near large roads, loss of accessibility, etc.

Hmm. Luckily there is a second option! We can invest our money in alternatives to buying petrol, thus solving all of the problems above not just temporarily but forever. "Sustainable" Transport! Here's how:

For *short-term relief* in the "transition period":

- Provide incentives for motorists, companies, industries (and governments) to shift to other (cleaner and cheaper) fuels;
- Provide employers with incentives to give employees public transport tickets, bicycles or more cash instead of company cars;
- Encourage car-pooling;
- Teach fuel-efficient driving techniques to motorists (ask Qld Transport how);
- Subsidise cheap public transport instead of cheap fuel; and
- Phase out existing fuel subsidies, exchanging them for long-term relief measures.

Because these short-term measures will not help everyone immediately, we urgently need to work towards more *long-term relief*:

- Invest in improvements to public transport networks instead of road networks;
- Invest in safe and convenient cycling and walking networks;
- Establish a national rail system to encourage inter-city freight and travel by rail instead of by road or air;
- Give solar, hydrogen, hybrid-electric technologies the boost they need;
- Allow only responsible development so that more people can walk, cycle or take public transport to access shops, workplaces, schools and anywhere else they need to go; and
- Expand education programs like Smogbusters!

So let's get started! We could have taken advantage of these ideas during the 1970s "petrol crisis" - let's not miss our opportunity again. It's time to demand *long-term relief* from petrol dependence, and as active community members and voters, we hold the solutions in our own hands.

Resources

The Australia Institute, Dr Clive Hamilton:
www.tai.org.au

Australian Institute of Petroleum: www.aip.com.au

Colin Campbell & Jean Laherrere: www.oilcrisis.com

Brian Fleay (1998), "Climaxing Oil: How Will Transport Adapt?", www.stp.murdoch.edu.au/OilFleay/oil.html

Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS, Prof Mark Diesendorf: www.isf.uts.edu.au

OPEC - Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries: www.opec.org

Recent Headlines

Brisbane light rail scrapped

Qld Govt Media Release - Transport Minister Steve Bredhauer

The State Government has announced that the proposed Brisbane Light Rail project will not be going ahead at this time. "The Brisbane Light Rail project has been the subject of detailed evaluation by the Government, but in spite of its obvious merits, significant difficulties remain unresolved," Mr Bredhauer said.

"The Prime Minister was receptive to discussions about how to provide better public transport benefits for South East Queensland with the \$65-million Centenary of Federation contribution. Formal discussions will commence immediately," Mr Bredhauer said. "Queensland and the Commonwealth government agree on the importance of public transport. I'm sure we can find agreement on a cooperative approach."

Call for filtration of M5 motorway emissions stack

Rehame NewsLines, newslines@rehame.com, 15/11/00

Residents, scientists and environmental groups have again called on the New South Wales Government to explain why it refuses to install a filtration system in an emissions stack for Sydney's M5 motorway. A forum at the NSW Parliament today condemned Labor politicians and the Roads and Traffic Authority for refusing to accept evidence about the effects emissions will have on air quality in the Turella area in the city's south-west.

US EPA advisory board calls diesel "soot" a carcinogen

Reuters News Service, USA, 17/10/00

A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency science advisory board has agreed with the agency's characterisation that diesel fuel exhaust is a "likely human carcinogen," according to an EPA official yesterday. EPA has said that diesel fuel pollutants were causing lung cancer and asthma attacks in children, a position affirmed by the 12-member advisory board. Tough new restrictions on tailpipe emissions for passenger vehicles were issued along a similar timetable in December of last year. EPA said the current level for sulphur in diesel was 500 parts per million, but would be reduced to 15 parts per million by June of 2006 under its pending plan.

Friends of the Earth consider legal action to halt global warming

FoE International, info@foei.org, http://www.foei.org

Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), one of the largest environmental groups on the planet, have announced that it may take legal action against industrialised countries and private industries that attempt to block the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming. The lawsuit draws inspiration from the landmark lawsuits that have forced change on the tobacco industry in recent years.

Londoners driving themselves to death

IPHW, www.ldb.org/iphw/index.htm, Environment News Service (ENS) 2000

LONDON, United Kingdom, October 12, 2000 (ENS) - Breathing on the streets of London is more dangerous than piloting a vehicle on them according to a new report, which claims that air pollution kills more people in the UK capital than road accidents. In 1998, 226 people died in road accidents compared to an estimated 380 deaths from transport emissions, said the report "On the Move," released Thursday. Each year, Londoners lose about 34,000 years of life from transport related pollution. Executive summary due to be posted on www.londonhealth.gov.uk

Car-free Bogotá referendum

from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, USA

The City of Bogotá, Colombia, has voted to be car free by 2015 by a margin of 51% in favour to 34% against. The citizens also voted by 63% to 26% to celebrate another Car Free Day in February 2001. For full election coverage, visit www.sise.com.co/carro1.htm

Public support for enviro-tax on fuel

Environmental Manager, Issue 319, 31/10/00, p.3.

A majority of Australians would be "happy" to pay current fuel prices - if they were linked to environmental taxes. A national survey commissioned by Greenpeace found 64% of respondents would happily pay current fuel prices if a proportion of the tax went to developing non-polluting alternative fuels and public transport.

Air powered car debuts in Johannesburg

Johann Verster, World-wide Information System for Renewable Energy (WIRE), 20/10/00, http://wire0.ises.org/wire/wire.nsf

A car that could revolutionise the motor industry and which led to death threats against the designer was unveiled at the Auto Africa show in Johannesburg in October. The e.Volution vehicle is powered by compressed air from high-pressure cylinders similar to those used by deep-sea divers. Made of feather-light material and weighing only 700 kg, it is essentially a city run around but can reach a speed of about 130km/h on the open road. The e.Volution will be able to travel 200 km on one tank of compressed air at a cost of about 1c/km and can run for 10 hours in city traffic. The inventor, Guy Negre, has apparently received death threats because of the invention, which could cripple the world's oil industry.

Honda hybrid heads down under

Environmental Manager, Issue 320, 8/11/00, p.4

It consumes 3.36 litres of petrol per 100km and you will be able to buy it in Australia from early next year. Honda's hybrid petrol/electric vehicle has a one-litre engine boosted by a DC electric motor. During deceleration the electric motor becomes a generator to transform kinetic energy into electricity. Honda is not yet revealing the Australian price of the vehicle.

NZ chooses green for bus and cycle lanes

EECA Sustainable Transport Network Newsletter Issue 13, Oct/Nov 2000, www.energywise.co.nz/

Transit New Zealand has endorsed the colour green as the preferred colour for the new exclusive bus and cycle lanes appearing throughout New Zealand. Green is already used for bus and cycle lanes in Auckland and Hamilton. The colour red is reserved for emergency shoulders along motorways. Trials in Auckland showed that green surfacing in bus-only lanes resulted in an immediate reduction in the number of unauthorised vehicles using them illegally.

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www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.html

Velo Mondiale World Cycling Conference Amsterdam, June 2000

Smogbuster Robyn Davies tells of bicycle heaven, and bicycle theft, in the Netherlands.

I was fortunate to be able to attend the second World Cycling Conference in June this year - where else but Amsterdam in the Netherlands! It was a great opportunity to become totally immersed in what the Dutch call their "cycling laboratory". Our 30-strong Australian contingent ate, drank and breathed cycling for a week, learning from people all over the world.

Anyone who has been to Amsterdam and other great cycling cities in Holland and northern Europe will know that it is truly heaven for bike riders. What many people may not know is just how much effort they have invested in providing policies and planning to make cycling, walking and public transport competitive with the motor vehicle. Some examples:

- high fuel prices and parking costs;
- pedestrian and bike precincts in city centres;
- allocating clear operating space to all forms of transport;
- giving priority to bikes, pedestrians and public transport;
- 30km/hr urban speed limits;
- government support for organisations that undertake green travel planning; and so on.

People in Holland don't cycle because the country is flat, although this certainly helps. Nor are they a country of cycling fanatics. They cycle because it's the quickest and most convenient method of getting around, especially in combination with bus and train. The Dutch recognise that they still have a long way to go, but with about one quarter of all trips made by bike (and up to 50% in towns like Houten), we can learn a great deal from their example.

The Bicycle Revolution is here!

Friends of the Earth Brisbane's new initiative has wheels spinning, writes Simon Fox

The Bicycle Revolution is a new not for profit co-operative situated in West End that is recycling discarded bicycles.

Initiated by Friends of the Earth and operating as a retail shop, The Bicycle Revolution aims to promote cycling, create employment and demonstrate the value of re-using existing resources. We also have a strong focus on community involvement and allow members to use the workshop space and tools.



The Netherlands are not alone in their efforts to increase cycling. Other examples I encountered at the conference include:

- Texas, USA - ensuring that every child receives Bike Ed training, and building a new "bike freeway" through the centre of Austin;
- UK - the first 5000 miles of the national cycle network has been officially opened, and primary and high school students are implementing Safe Routes to School programs;
- Czech Republic - a small group of activists founded the international car free day movement which this year saw hundreds of cities in Europe going car free on 21 September;
- US - massively increased funding from the ISTEA legislation has resulted in a great deal of innovative work for walking, cycling and public transport;
- Montreal, Canada - hosts of the first Velo Mondiale Conference in 1990, their continued commitment has made them possibly the most cycle friendly city in Canada;
- Ireland - have developed a very good design manual for cycling infrastructure, and have also been implementing new bus and cycle lanes.

To my chagrin, I also learned firsthand that Amsterdam has the highest level of bike theft anywhere in the world, so my lovely mountain bike has opted to stay in the country and enjoy the bike paths without me! Still, I got a new bike and went cycling in France where I experienced the incredible courtesy that drivers give to cyclists there.

The next international cycling conference will be held in September 2001 in Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland. For more information, visit www.velo-city2001.org

The Bicycle Revolution stands on the foundation that bicycles are an ecologically and socially sustainable mode of transport. However, all too often they are left under the house or taken to the tip where their value lies unused. The recycling process involves gathering the bicycles that have met this fate and rejuvenating them to once again grace the roads and bike paths with their presence.

The Bicycle Revolution relies on the support of the community to ensure it can continue recycling bicycles and sell them at affordable prices. If you have an old bike lying unused

WWWbsites

Qld Transport's new Environment page
www.transport.qld.gov.au/environment

Brisbane City Council's new "Have Your Say Online" project

Click "Your City Your Say" at www.brisbane.qld.gov.au

OECD Environmentally Sustainable Transport
www.oecd.org/env/ccst/est/estproj/estproj1.htm

The Viridian Meter

Ever wondered exactly how much power is being used by each appliance in your house, and how much it is costing? A "Viridian Meter" will tell you this and more, and would be an attractive art piece as well. Try:

www.sustainer.org/Viridian/
www.bespoke.org/viridian

The Compressed Air Car

www.zeropollution.com/

Climate Action Network Australia's

Their website is recently updated, at:
www.climateaustralia.org

Campaign for Public Transport (NZ)

Auckland-based organisation that also supports vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.
www.getmoving.org.nz/index2.html

Auckland Get Around

A link to the many organisations involved in the transport scene in Auckland. These include central, regional and local government; bus, ferry and rail operators; and the public interest groups working to promote alternative forms of transport.
www.aucklandgetaround.co.nz/

Car Pooling

Some new non-governmental approaches to car pooling.
www.carpooling.com.au
www.shareide.com.au

somewhere and would be happy to see it rejuvenated, why not donate it to us? All funds that are generated are used to further the aims and objectives of The Bicycle Revolution and Friends of the Earth Brisbane.

So if you are in the market for a quality recycled bicycle, need a service or repair on your bike or want to pass on your old pushie to be revitalised, pop in and see us at 294 Montague Rd, West End or give us a call on 3342 7829 ...and remember, the revolution is only a bicycle away.



Queensland
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Smogbusters Events

6 Dec - Smogbusters Action Group meeting (then 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 17 Jan 2001)

29-30 Dec - Woodford Folk Festival Smogbusters Workshop, Friday and Saturday afternoons

14 March 2001 - National Smogbusters Day

Other Upcoming Events

4 Dec - Prof Douglas Dockery, "Does air pollution cause heart attacks? Cardiovascular Effects of Particulate Air Pollution", 4pm, Griffith University Logan. (07) 3382 1039.

6-7 Dec - Darlene Clover, "Beyond Awareness Raising", Griffith University EcoCentre, Nathan Campus. (07) 3875 7124, a.nicholson@mailbox.gu.edu.au

8 Dec - Darlene Clover & Bud Hall, "Building Our Understandings: Community empowerment through participation and evaluation," 9am-5pm, Brisbane Powerhouse, 119 Lamington Street New Farm. Contact Annie on 07 3254 4922.

20 Jan 2001 - Youth Environment Society (YES) official launch, 2-4pm, 108 Green Camp Road, Wakerley. (07) 3396 8260 or 0409 068 016. More info at www.yesworld.org.au

20-22 Feb 2001 - Australia: Walking the 21st Century - an International Walking Conference (Perth). (08) 9313 8680 / jseaton@transport.wa.gov.au

7-8 June 2001 - Managing Mobility: Sustainable Transport for our Second Century of Federation, AITPM, Melbourne. Tel (02) 9875 2855; or www.aitpm.org.au

Helpful People

Allergy, Sensitivity & Env Health Association

Dorothy Bowes, asehaqld@powerup.com.au
Tel/Fax 07 3284 8742, www.asehaqld.org.au/

Armidale Air Quality Group

Dorothy Robinson, drobinso@lash.une.edu.au
Tel 02 6773 3209, ww.ozemail.com.au/~airqual

Bicycle Queensland

Ben Wilson, Tel/Fax 07 3844 1144
enq@biq.org.au, www.biq.org.au/

Brisbane Region Environment Council (BREC)

Mick Petter, Tel 07 3901 5577, Fax 07 3899 1953
info@brec.ozecol.org, www.brec.ozecol.org

Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC)

Trevor Aclfield, Tel 07 4927 8644, Fax 07 4927 8279
ccc@cqnet.com.au, www.wamoz.com/ccc/

Citizens for Public Transport

John Coyle, Tel 3288 7953

Feet First: Advocates for Pedestrian Access

Bob Culerbiloon, Tel 07 3342 6415

Fresh Air Brisbane

Brian Clark, Tel 07 3391 4160
clarkba@powerup.com.au

Friends of the Earth Brisbane

Tel 07 3846 5793, foebrisbane@uq.net.au
Bicycle Revolution Co-op Tel 07 3342 7829
294 Montague Rd, West End 4101

Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Assoc Qld

John Mayo, Tel 07 3391 2044
jmayo@pqaq.com.au, www.pqaq.com.au

Public Transport Alliance

Michael Yeates, Tel 07 3371 9355
m.yeates@mailbox.uq.edu.au

Rivermouth Action Group

Barry Wilson, Tel 07 3399 6204
activist@rag.org.au, www.rag.org.au

Government Resources

TransInfo - SEQ bus, train & ferry timetable info
Tel 131 230, www.transinfo.qld.gov.au

Brisbane City Council / Brisbane Transport

Tel 07 3403 8888, enquiries@brisbane.qld.gov.au
GPO Box 1434 Brisbane 4001
www.brisbane.qld.gov.au

Local Government Association of Qld (LGAQ)

Tel 07 3000 2222, www.lgaq.asn.au

Queensland Transport

www.transport.qld.gov.au
Smoky Vehicle Hotline 13 20 19
State Cycle Unit, Tel 07 3253 4386

Queensland Environment Protection Agency

EPA Pollution Hotline: Tel 1800 501 087
EPA air quality monitoring data:
www.env.qld.gov.au/environment/science/air

Environment Australia

Community Information Unit 1800 803 772
www.environment.gov.au

